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25 February 1960

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Conversation with Messrs. Sprague and Nielsen
of the Sprague Committee

1. Cord Meyer and I met Messrs. Sprague and Nielsen at lunch today for a preliminary discussion of the program of the Sprague Committee.
2. Mr. Sprague said that he was planning the organizational meeting of the Committee at 213 Executive Office Building at 4:30 p.m. on Monday, 29 February. He expects Mr. Philip Reed to attend but Mr. Jackson will apparently not be able to get away from New York. Mr. Sprague expects Mr. Amory at 5:45. It was agreed that Mr. Amory would give a general briefing on the world situation with particular emphasis on critical developments to be anticipated in the next five to ten years. It was agreed that this would last half an hour to be followed by a half-hour or so on questions.
3. Mr. Sprague has sent a letter to the Director requesting a written statement from the Agency describing action taken to comply with the recommendations of the Jackson Committee. I pointed out that at least some of the recommendations of the Jackson Committee relate to rather intricate and large-scale Agency programs which would be difficult to handle in writing. For example, written statements responsive to recommendations 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 43, 44, 45 and 47 would involve a fairly comprehensive review of a major portion of the Agency's programs, including consideration of a number of projects and activities contemplated for the future. Although there may be some advantage in submitting written comments on some of the steps taken to

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implement aspects of the Jackson Committee Report, various considerations, including security, seem to me to make it inadvisable to attempt anything like a full written analysis of our operational programs for this purpose. Both Mr. Sprague and Mr. Nielsen recognized the complexity of the problem and it was agreed that it would be discussed later.

4. I also pointed out the undesirability of having a review of the Agency's activities in this depth made the responsibility of one staff member of the Committee. Although neither Mr. Sprague nor Mr. Nielsen mentioned this, it was my understanding that they had contemplated assigning Col. Twombly (the Defense Department member on the Committee's staff) to undertake a review of Agency action to implement the Jackson Committee recommendations. I said that we would be delighted to give the Committee itself a briefing in as much detail as they desired of relevant Agency programs but that I thought that such a review should be handled at the Committee level and not delegated to an individual staff member. Mr. Sprague and Mr. Nielsen fully concurred in this and asked how much time such briefings would consume. Cord Meyer and I estimated that an adequate presentation could be made during the course of three working days. Mr. Sprague said that he thought this would be reasonable and expressed a particular desire to have Mr. C. D. Jackson present during the course of the Agency's presentation. He is going to discuss this with the Committee and let us have at least a tentative date for the initial hearings. It was also agreed that during the course of the hearings subjects of particular interest to the Committee would probably develop which Mr. Sprague and Mr. Nielsen might wish personally to examine in greater detail.

5. Mr. Sprague and Mr. Nielsen continue to be concerned about the scope of the Committee's investigation. On the one hand they wish to avoid problems which appear to involve essentially questions of Government policy. On the other hand, they do not wish to become involved in the administrative or purely operational detail of particular projects. They said that it would be very helpful to have a statement from the Agency of particular issues

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or subjects which we feel the Committee should examine. I said that we would let them have such a list

6. Although the present plan is to complete the report by the middle of May, Mr. Sprague apparently does not feel that there is necessarily a deadline as the purpose of the report is to provide guidance to a new Administration. Mr. Sprague seemed to think that there was no real reason why the investigation could not be prolonged into the summer or early fall.

7. We described some of the particular problems involved in programs involving the Soviet bloc and the underdeveloped areas. It was pointed out that many of the activities and approaches recommended by the Jackson Committee continue to be valid although the emphasis to be accorded particular types of activities has changed with changing circumstances.

8. As an introduction to the hearings to be held on the Agency's programs I undertook to give Mr. Sprague and Mr. Nielsen a briefing on the organization of the Agency some time next week.

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